



State Senator Tupac A. Hunter

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Detroit Wins Justice Assistance Grants

Detroit and other Michigan cities and communities are the recipients of Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants (Byrne JAG) through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This program is a partnership among federal, state and local governments to create safer communities. Overseen by the federal Department of Justice (DOJ), the Byrne JAG program makes grants to states and local governments to improve the criminal justice system.

Governor Granholm recently announced the recipients of \$41.2 million in grants that were distributed through a competitive grant process. These grants, administered by the state's Office of Drug Control Policy (ODCP) in the Department of Community Health, targeted key areas, including community policing and community prosecution; local correctional resources; multi-jurisdictional task forces; problem solving courts, including mental health and drug courts; prescription drug abuse awareness; and technology enhancement projects.

The Detroit Police Department will receive a grant of \$277,000 to work with the Detroit Public Schools (DPS) and Wayne State University (WSU) to decrease crime in school areas, and another grant of \$360,000 to work with DPS and WSU to create a new record management system. Detroit's 36th District Court will receive a grant of \$288,116 to hire an additional probation officer and legal advocate to help with the court's domestic violence caseload.

Other grants include:

- \$721,961 to the Wayne County Sheriff's Department to supervise work crews of parolees in the Osborne Neighborhood. The crews will board up open and dangerous buildings, remove debris, and make other improvement efforts. The Department will also patrol the neighborhood, conduct home visits with offenders, and provide encouragement and support to these young adults.
- \$145,000 to the Wayne County Sheriff's Department to provide funding for infrastructure capacity improvements, upgrades and technical services to service and expand the success of the Southern Michigan Information Alliance (SMIA). SMIA consists of twelve Public Safety agencies that have joined forces to create a regional consortium.
- \$145,000 to the Wayne County Sheriff's Department to provide funding for the data transformation, connectivity, and licensing of a crime information database, and software tools for public safety agencies in Wayne County. The proposed system will build upon current regional information sharing initiatives by creating a crime information database structure with related crime analysis and mapping tools.
- \$921,888 to the Wayne County Prosecuting Attorney to help establish the Wayne County Prosecutor's Community Prosecution Program to reduce violent crime in the city of Detroit. This program would aggressively target the main perpetrators of gun violence and non-fatal shootings, carjacking, armed robberies, open-air drug markets and gang activity. Seven full-time community prosecutors will be assigned to each Detroit Police District or Precinct.
- \$1,022,436 to the 3rd Circuit Court, Family Division – County of Wayne to allow the 3rd Circuit juvenile drug court program to continue services when current program funding ends this fiscal year.
- \$636,899 to the Wayne State University Department of Public Safety to allow the Wayne State University Police Department and community partners to implement a COMPSTAT initiative to enhance the safety of Midtown Detroit through data-driven, problem-oriented policing.
- \$12,000 to the Wayne County Airport Authority Police Division to improve the effectiveness of the Airport Special Investigation Unit with the implementation of a covert video surveillance system.

For a complete list of Michigan's competitive grant recipients, go to http://www.michigan.gov/documents/gov/Byrne_JAG_ARRA_Awards_list_286067_7.pdf.

The Byrne JAG program places an emphasis on breaking the cycle of substance abuse and crime, combating violence, holding offenders accountable, enhancing law enforcement initiatives, and supporting advancements in adjudication. To date, more than \$67 million has been made available to Michigan law enforcement through the Byrne JAG program in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.



State Senator Tupac A. Hunter

*Serving the 5th District Constituents in
Detroit, Dearborn Heights & Inkster*

Legislative Report



MICHIGAN STATE SENATE
TUPAC A. HUNTER
STATE SENATOR • 5TH DISTRICT

Dear Friend,

This newsletter is intended to provide you with an up-to-date report on the state's budget, especially as it relates to the funding priorities that I continue to advocate for on behalf of the citizens of northwest Detroit, Dearborn Heights, and Inkster. While money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is starting to make an impact through grants and other projects, communities across Michigan are still enduring many difficulties. In spite of these challenging times, it is still the state's job to provide vital services to our citizens. Please know that the health, safety, and well-being of all of my constituents continues to be my first and foremost priority.

Throughout this budget process, I will continue to fight for critical funding for the various programs and services that will ensure the survival of our communities and provide support for the hardworking citizens who live there. I pledge to continue working diligently with my colleagues and the Governor to keep you and your families safe, healthy and secure during these difficult economic times.

As always, please feel free to contact my Lansing office toll-free at 1-866-262-7305 if you have any thoughts or questions you want to share.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Very truly yours,

State Senator • Tupac A. Hunter

How to Contact Me

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Tupac A. Hunter

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Talk Time with Tupac

Senator Hunter has scheduled three coffee hours to give constituents an opportunity to personally share their ideas and concerns.



Detroit: Mary's Grill, 20804 Plymouth Road

All coffee hours are held on the 1st Friday of the month from 10-11 AM.

Inkster: McDonald's, 27125 Cherry Hill Road

All coffee hours are held on the 2nd Friday of the month from 10-11 AM.

Dearborn Heights: McDonald's, 6412 North Telegraph Road

All coffee hours are held on the 3rd Friday of the month from 10-11 AM.

You are invited to attend whichever coffee hours work best for your schedule. If you are interested in joining me, please call my office toll-free at 1-866-262-7305 to confirm your attendance. Please be sure to leave a message if you call after hours.

The Struggle Continues for Michigan's Unemployed Workers

The Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth recently announced that Michigan's unemployment rate reached 15.2% for June, the highest it's been in 26 years. Some economists predict that it will continue to rise a little more each month until mid-2010. The entire nation is facing the worst recession since World War II, but Michigan and the greater Detroit area have been hit particularly hard.

While these numbers are certainly disheartening, I have been working to pass unemployment modernization legislation that would secure \$138.9 million in federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to extend a much-needed lifeline for Michigan's unemployed workers.

House Bill 4785 would allow individuals enrolled in a state-approved jobs training program to receive unemployment insurance benefits for an extra 26 weeks. House Bill 4786 would allow adults working between 16 and 40 hours per week to become eligible for unemployment insurance benefits beginning after January 1, 2011. The Michigan House of Representatives passed their version

of this legislation on May 6, and State Senator Deborah Cherry (D-Burton) and I have introduced identical bills in the Senate. Unfortunately, neither version of the unemployment modernization legislation has been considered by the Senate Majority.



Getting workers the skills they need to land a new job will help Michigan attract investment and more business to the state. But while workers are obtaining these skills, they still need to be able to pay their mortgage and put food on the table. Likewise, with good-paying, full-time jobs so hard to find, part-time jobs are often the only ones available. And when a part-time worker gets laid off, they need a way to keep their head above water until they can find their next job. Also, study after study has proven that every \$1 spent on unemployment benefits generates \$2.15 in additional economic activity as these workers use the funds to buy necessities.

Lawmakers in 27 other states recognize this and have made changes necessary to receive the federal funds dedicated to them. If this reform continues to be blocked, these funds, which are made up of tax dollars paid into the system by Michigan families, could wind up going back to Washington to be handed out to other states who don't need it as much as we do. Michigan already pays in more to the federal government than we get back in funding, and we shouldn't miss this opportunity when we finally have a chance to get our fair share.

Senate Democrats continue to fight for passage of these bills and recently launched a website calling for action on this plan. The site, www.senate.michigan.gov/dem/helpmiworkers, encourages visitors to sign a petition and contact their Senators to demand support for the legislation. We have also launched a Facebook Cause page to gather support for the unemployment modernization bills which can be found at <http://apps.facebook.com/causes/317737>.

Budget Bills Move to Conference Committees

Both the Michigan House of Representatives and the Senate have passed different versions of the budget bills for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. These bills will now go to a conference committee where the differences will be worked out by legislators. The conference committee will provide a report with recommendations for each budget. At that time, both chambers will vote to either adopt or reject the conference committee reports. A balanced budget must be passed before September 30, 2009.



My Democratic colleagues and I have labored for many programs during the budget negotiation process. We will continue to fight for funding as the bills are debated in conference committees. Funding that needs to be restored in the budget are as follows:

K-12 School Aid Budget (House Bill 4447)

- Restore the \$110 per pupil funding cut, funding critical to school budgets around the state.
- Restore 90% of funding for declining enrollment grants to help lessen the devastating impact on school districts.
- Restore 90% of funding for small high schools with a focus on personal attention and engaging real-world applicable curriculum.
- Restore 90% of funding for early childhood programs like school readiness, 0-3, and great start programs.
- Restore 90% of funding for the Detroit Area Pre-College Engineering Program.
- Restore 90% of funding for health/science middle colleges.
- Uphold essential funding for special education and vocational education.

Department of Human Services Budget (SB 248)

- Restore \$13.5 million to train laid off workers for the new economy and fund clothing, transportation, and other support for people looking for jobs.
- Protect Local Office Emergency Funds that help keep children in their homes and assist families in paying their bills.
- Restore almost \$54 million to avoid severe cuts to child care, before- and after-school programs, and early childhood education programs.
- Fight for \$29 million to provide \$14 per month to assist disabled individuals living independently for the costs associated with paying rent, buying food and purchasing medical supplies.
- Restore \$3.9 million to continue the Clothing Allowance at \$75 per child per year to allow families to provide for their children.
- Preserve funding to avoid laying off 100 Department of Human Services workers and to uphold FIP grant funding that offers modest support for Michigan's most vulnerable families.

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Investing in Early Childhood Programs is Investing in the Future

According to a recent study by the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC), Michigan ranks 27th in the nation for child well-being. With recent cuts passed by the State Senate to early childhood programs, Michigan could very well fall to the bottom of this list. Educating our children should always be a priority no matter what the state of our economy is. As we look to the future, an investment in our children now not only produces immediate benefits, but could secure long-term economic stability as well.

Studies show that the benefits of early childhood programs outweigh the costs, with economic benefits of between \$2 and \$7 for each dollar invested. These programs were created to make sure Michigan's children enter school intellectually, emotionally, and socially ready to learn. Currently, 60% of children entering kindergarten in the state lack these skills and teachers complain that getting them up to speed detracts from the educational experience of the children who show up prepared. Recently, many legislators were visited by members of Michigan's Great Start Collaborative (funded through the ECIC) which was formed by the state in 2005 to meet the need for a greater focus on early childhood development. The collaboratives are made up of local people who create a system of local programs for young children, from birth to age 5, and their families.

The collaboratives in Wayne County have worked hard to ensure that our children have the services they need to start school ready to learn.

Certainly parents play an important role in preparing a child for school. But with the high unemployment rate in Michigan, parents are struggling to make ends meet and sometimes have to work multiple jobs. Cuts to early childhood programs hurt Michigan's low-income families, who will lose child care subsidies for children who are not old enough for school.

Early childhood is a critical time for brain development which will make a difference in a child's ability to succeed in the classroom and in future careers. We can all see that Michigan's job market is changing from manual labor and manufacturing to industries based in science and technology. To succeed our children will need the best possible education, and that education must start early.

Investing in a child's early years is the best way to prepare them for a lifetime of learning. I recently joined with Senate Democrats and fought to restore almost \$54 million in funding to early childhood

programs and the ECIC in the current budget. Restoring these funds would help us avoid severe cuts to child care, before- and after-school programs, and early childhood education programs. Making these cuts would jeopardize another \$200 million in federal funding that our state can't afford to lose.

As we continue work on the budget, I will keep working to ensure that our young children have access to the programs they need to get a good solid start in life.



Senator Hunter is joined by third grade students from Hick's Elementary School and their teachers, Mrs. Mitchell and Miss Busby, and chaperones during their State Capitol tour on June 4, 2009.

Budget Bills Move to Conference Committees *Continued from previous page*

Community College (HB 4435), Department of Education (HB 4438), and Higher Education (HB 4441) Budgets

- Protect funding for the Michigan Promise Grants program that offers \$4,000 scholarships to qualified high school and college students to pursue a college education.
- Restore \$89.8 million for the Michigan College Access Grants and other state-funded scholarship programs that Michigan families depend on.
- Preserve \$1.9 million in nursing grant money to help train students for nursing jobs.
- Restore renaissance zone reimbursement funding that returns local dollars that are mandated for community colleges as part of the Community College budget.

Department of Community Health Budget (HB 4436)

- Restore funding to current year Healthy Michigan Fund prior to

Executive Order cuts.

- Restore proposed 8% Medicaid provider rate reduction.
- Provide \$5 million General Fund to pay 17% of COBRA costs, which helps out-of-work residents cover healthcare costs.
- Allow the Department of Community Health to recover funds from incidences where consumers have been injured or killed by faulty prescription drugs if Michigan's outdated drug industry immunity law is repealed.
- Restore funding for the Michigan Essential Health Provider Program.
- Restore protections assuring Medicaid clients can continue to receive certain mental health medications.

General Government Budget (SB 245)

- Restore funding for the 21st Century Jobs Fund to the Governor's recommended \$52.95 million to diversify Michigan's economy and help create thousands of new jobs.

(This program was cut by \$20.55 million.)

- Oppose the 12% cut to local revenue sharing that helps fund local police, firefighters, water systems, road maintenance and other vital services.

Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth Budget (SB 243)

- Restore funding for the No Worker Left Behind Program that offers training assistance to workers training for a new job. The Governor recommended funding the program at \$15 million and Senate Republicans cut that funding to \$6.6 million.
- Increase the amount of dependent benefits offered to unemployed workers from \$6.00 per dependent to \$20.00 per dependent.
- Restore workplace safety provisions by removing the prohibition on ergonomic guidelines.
- Help citizens with the high cost of auto insurance by prohibiting the use of credit scores to determine auto insurance rates.